

Obedience even to Tyrannic Princes.

expenditure of princes, though it should exceed the ordinary limits." Nay, they owe obedience to even a tyrannic prince, and in support of this extreme view of obedience he quotes a large number of passages from the Old and New Testaments. " And since in almost all ages we see that some princes, careless of their duties, on which they ought to have been intent, live, without solicitude, in luxurious sloth; others, bent on their own interest, venially prostitute all rights, privileges, judgments, and enactments; others pillage poor people of their money, and afterwards squander it in insane largesses ; others act as mere robbers, pillaging houses, violating matrons, and slaying the innocent,—many cannot be persuaded to recognise such persons for princes, whose command, as far as lawful, they are bound to obey. For while in this unworthy conduct . . . they behold no appearance of the image of God, which ought to be conspicuous in every magistrate, they cannot recognise the ruler whose dignity and authority Scripture recommends to us. And undoubtedly the natural feeling of the human mind has always been not less to assail tyrants with hatred and execration, than to look up to just kings with love and veneration. But if we have respect to the Word of God it will lead us further, and make us subject not only to the authority of those princes who honestly and faithfully perform their duty towards us, but to all princes, by whatever means they have so become, although there is nothing they less perform than the duty of princes." " Although the Lord takes vengeance on unbridled dominations (as is proved by historical examples), let us not, therefore, suppose that that vengeance is committed to us, to whom no command has been given but to suffer and obey." It is only the part of those specially appointed for this purpose to crush the tyranny of rulers, as in the case of the Ephori among the Spartans, the Tribunes of the people among the Romans, the Demarchs among the Athenians. In modern kingdoms, he is inclined, though not dogmatically, to invest this power in the three orders of the States-General.

Calvin thus leaves little or no room for political progress. For him Scripture settles everything in politics as in theology. Authority once established, always established, is evidently his conviction, and, no matter how absurd or unendurable, it must